United Nations S/2004/785

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 October 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 1 October 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 22 September 2004, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

04-53577 (E) 061004

Annex

Letter dated 22 September 2004 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), I attach a report on ISAF operations covering the period 12 May to 11 August 2004 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the present letter and its enclosure available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jaap de **Hoop Scheffer**

Enclosure

Quarterly Report to the United Nations on ISAF Operations

INTRODUCTION

1. Resolution 1510 (2003) of the United Nations Security Council requested the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide quarterly reports on the implementation of its mandate. This is the fourth such report by NATO and it covers the period from 12 May to 11 August 2004.

2. As of 27 July 2004, ISAF total strength was 6,875 personnel from 26 NATO nations plus 269 personnel from 11 non-NATO nations.

3. On 1 June 2004, ISAF assumed responsibility for the operation of the military part of the international airport in Kabul, from Germany.

4. On 1 July 2004, ISAF expanded its mandate to nine provinces, an area of operations known as Area North, outside of Kabul and its environs, in order to support the Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA) and its successors in providing a secure environment and assist in the reconstruction of the country. ISAF continues to work towards the assumption of command by ISAF of additional provincial reconstruction teams in the north and north-east of the country.

5. On 23 July, the North Atlantic Council decided to deploy two battalions to Afghanistan to augment ISAF forces during the upcoming presidential elections. This decision followed the declaration by the NATO Heads of State and Government at the Istanbul Summit and implements NATO's decision to assist the Afghan authorities in providing security during the election period, within means and capabilities.

6. On 9 August 2004, Canadian Lieutenant General Rick Hillier handed over command of the International Security Assistance Force to the French Lieutenant General Jean-Louis Py, the commander of Eurocorps.

II. THE SECURITY SITUATION

Security Inside ISAF's Areas of Operations

7. The overall security situation in Kabul and its environs over the reporting period has been relatively calm but unstable, with continual warnings of attacks against ISAF, Coalition Forces, the Afghan Transitional Authority and voter registration sites. The relatively calm situation was disrupted on 23 May when one ISAF soldier was killed and two others injured by an RPG attack on Jalalabad Road, and again on 18 and 20 July when two rocket attacks occurred in Kabul. The recent upsurge of incidents indicates that the potential exists that anti-ISAF/ATA activities may increase during the upcoming elections.

8. The overall security situation in Area North is characterised by the ongoing struggle between regional major power brokers and by the drug production and trafficking which, together, represent the two major threats to peace. In early June, the security situation temporarily worsened when five aid workers of the medical aid group "Médecins sans frontières" were killed in Badghis province, bordering Area North to the west, and twelve Chinese workers were killed 35 km outside of Kunduz just 7 days later. However, this abnormally high level of activity for the region was probably locally and criminally-based.

9. The situation in the north-eastern area has been relatively quiet over the past 3 months. Apart from two incidents on 16 June, the situation in Kunduz is calm, yet unstable.

10. In the north-west, the ongoing struggle between General Dostum's Jumbesh and General Atta's Jamiat parties continued; bombing incidents occurred in Maimana and ambushes or kidnappings in Mazar-e-Sharif during the months of June and July. On 4 July, an ongoing confrontation between General Atta and the provincial Chief of Police, General Akram (Pashtum), escalated into a siege by Atta's forces of Akram's compound. Intervention by the Mazar PRT calmed the situation, which was ultimately resolved by the central government's decision to replace General Akram.

Security Outside ISAF's Areas of Operations

11. Outside the ISAF Areas of Operations, the security situation has become tense, especially in the capital cities of Herat, Ghor and Farah provinces. The city and province of Herat is controlled by Ismail Khan. He is expected to continue to exert influence in the region. The ATA has only limited influence in the region at present. Increased friction amongst local commanders resulted in factional fighting in the western part of Ghor and south-eastern part of Badghis with limited spill over effect observed in eastern Herat province. As a result of the fighting, several policemen and civilians in Herat and Farah provinces were killed during the reporting period. The situation continues to evolve rapidly.

12. The eastern / south-eastern part of Afghanistan remains the area with the highest threat level and is currently the main area of operations of the Opposing Militant Forces (OMF): the Hezb-e-Islami / Gulbuddin (HIG) group operates in the northern part of the region, Al Qaida in the centre and the Taliban in the south. Coalition forces, Afghan troops, aid workers and reconstruction companies have been attacked regularly.

13. In the southern provinces as well, a high level of activity can be observed from opposing militant forces. Foreign aid workers and contractors to non-governmental organisations are most vulnerable, and attacks have led to the withdrawal of some international and non-governmental organisations, or to the downsizing of their presence. There is a significant threat to the voter registration and elections process in the south, south-east and east of the country, as the Taliban continue their intimidation tactics. The most active area for the Taliban is in the neighbouring districts of Zabul, Uruzgan and Kandahar provinces, which must be considered as high-risk areas for non-governmental organisations and the Afghan Transitional Authority.

III. SUPPORT TO AFGHAN TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY AND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION TO AFGHANISTAN

Support to the Voter Registration and Elections Process

14. The separation of the presidential elections in October 2004 from the more complex parliamentary elections in Spring 2005 will allow more time for the latter to be prepared. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that one requisite from the Bonn Agreement, the publication of a census of the Afghan population, has not yet been met. At the end of the reporting period, the total amount of registered voters approached the 10 million mark, of which 43% women. A security plan in support of voter registration is being co-ordinated with ISAF, the US Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan and the Afghan Ministry of the Interior. But while the participants to the Bonn Agreement had pledged to withdraw all military units from Kabul and other urban centres or areas where ISAF was deployed,

militias continue to exist and the cantonment of heavy weapons in Kabul has not yet been completed. Sustained progress in both areas remains essential to establish the legitimacy of the democratic process.

15. On 23 July 2004, The NATO Secretary General announced the Council's decision that ISAF would provide support for the presidential elections. ISAF will assist the Afghan Transitional Authorities, the Afghan National Army and police forces as well as UNAMA and other organisations in their effort to support the entire election process. During the period leading up to the elections, Election Support Forces will provide enhanced area security as well as an enhanced capability to respond to incidents where they arise.

16. More specifically, ISAF support will be configured to provide additional forces at two levels in theatre. A first level will be located at the NATO-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Augmentation of PRTs will be matched to the local security situation, as determined by lead nations, in consultation with COMISAF. At second level, NATO has decided to deploy, in close co-operation with the respective nations, the operational Quick Reaction Force (Spanish Battalion) and the theatre operational reserve battalion (Italian NRF 3 battalion). These additional forces will deploy to Afghanistan by September and will remain for about 8 weeks to cover the election period.

Support to Security Sector Reforms

17. In terms of ISAF support to security sector reform (SSR), the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme remains one of the primary challenges for the Afghan Transitional Authority. The principal regional commanders and power brokers are threatened by it and for individual militiamen, it is a transition from the only way of life many of them have known. The reintegration part of the programme has focused on offers to the soldier ranks and the packages offered to commanders is less developed and more superficial. It continues to provide intransigent commanders with reasons for non-compliance. The programme is one of the fundamental requirements in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. Without it, the power of the regional commanders will not be broken.

18. Security sector reform includes the cantonment of heavy weapons, which is inextricably linked to the DDR programme and to which ISAF is strongly committed. The cantonment of the remaining heavy weapons in and around Kabul recommenced on 27 March 2004 with the intention for it to be complete before the presidential elections. It is important to recognise that the successful cantonment of heavy weapons in Kabul sets the conditions for a successful process nation-wide. As of July 2004, approximately 400 out of an estimated 590 heavy weapons had been cantoned. Specifically, the cantonment of the Resh Kore division was completed on 25 July. The most challenging unit remaining is 8 Division with an estimated 250 heavy weapons of all types. The agreement to proceed with the cantonment of these weapons was finally signed on 21 July 2004.

19. Security sector reform also includes the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and ISAF continues to co-ordinate some training and development opportunities, utilising embedded training teams and a "mentor" programme to assist in the leadership and professional development of ANA headquarters and counterpart units. The ANA has made significant progress toward becoming an effective military force. In terms of recruiting, training and fielding of units, this pillar of security sector reform has either met or exceeded the target objectives. ANA forces continue to be effective on operations, albeit while engaged in relatively limited roles, and this success reinforces the perception of the army becoming a national institution. The brigade headquarters of the ANA have gained some basic experience in the command and control of subordinate units while on

deployment. Finally, it is worth noting that the Afghan National Army relies heavily on the United States Office of Military Co-operation in Afghanistan for logistic, administrative and "in-extremis" support.

20. As indicated in NATO's last report, enhancing the capability and authority of Afghan national police (ANP) forces, particularly outside of Kabul, remains critical to extending the rule of law and the authority of the central government. By the end of July 2004, 17,500 police had been trained, of a planned 20,000. The overall plan is to train a total of 62,500 officers, and 20,000 by 9 October 2004. However, until the force has adequate equipment, weapons, vehicles and communications, there can be little effective collective training.

21. ISAF and the NATO Joint Force Command in Brunssum have commenced a review to assess the feasibility of sustaining a long-term mobile assistance team programme which would parallel similar ventures implemented by the United States Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan and work in conjunction with UNAMA and other international organisations principally concerned with police reform.

22. Concerning counter-narcotics, there is a five-year national strategy passed by the Afghan Transitional Authority in May 2003 which envisages that a 70% reduction in poppy production can be attained by 2007 and a 100% reduction by 2012. Overall, however, the counter narcotics effort remains in its infancy. The targeted eradication programme for 2004 was unsuccessful both in its provincial or central government sub-components. Eradication operations for 2004 have now ended and the Central Poppy Eradication Force is being encouraged to begin planning and preparation now for next year's activities. The Afghan Special Narcotics Force has had some effect in its interdiction operations. Approximately 50 tons of heroin and opiates have been seized and destroyed, together with numerous laboratories and production facilities. Nonetheless, this represents a small proportion of the heroin that will flow from Afghanistan this year.

23. Judicial reform efforts continue to present significant challenges to the Afghan authorities and the international community as a whole. Current efforts have been only marginally effective and greater co-ordination and increased involvement by the international community is urgently required. Particular focus must be made on infrastructure improvements (including prisons), organisation, functionality and independence of the judiciary, training of attorneys, and codification and enforcement of the law.

Civil – Military Co-operation

24. ISAF CIMIC officers have established frequent liaison with the ATA, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and military headquarters. They are tasked to build good relationships and confidence with the civil actors and promote collaboration. Through their activities, ISAF endeavours to de-conflict programmes, promote COMISAF's intent and master messages, establish open communication, within security constraints, identify capability gaps in the Afghan Transitional Authorities, the international and UN organisations and effect liaison with stake-holders at all levels.

25. In order to improve co-ordination, mutual understanding, co-operation and assistance, ISAF may establish outside of its headquarters a centre dedicated to civil-military co-operation.

Kabul Afghanistan International Airport (KAIA)

26. As announced, ISAF took over responsibility for the military part of the KAIA from Germany on 1 June 2004. There is a critical need to improve airport capacity and, with respect to its rehabilitation, it is crucial that the international community as a whole adopt a common approach. To that end, a Steering Board has been formed to co-ordinate airport rehabilitation issues. It includes NATO, the ATA, UNAMA, the World Bank, the ICAO, IATA and the US Federal Aviation Authority.

27. While the objective remains to pass over control, management and running of KAIA back to national authorities, it is recognised that this will not happen for some time, particularly as there are more urgent demands on governmental resources.

28. In the meantime, flight activity by both military and civilian users is increasing as the economy grows and ISAF expands its operations.

Future ISAF Operations

29. NATO continues to consider that the concept of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) is the central element of ISAF's expanded mission. Although they do not represent significant military combat power in the conventional sense, PRTs are the most appropriate vehicle for meeting the UN mandate of assisting the Afghan authorities and UNAMA in extending security. In addition to the PRT in Konduz, an existing PRT at Mazar-e-Sharif was transferred to ISAF control on 1 July 2004. ISAF had three operational PRTs at the end of the reporting period (Konduz, Mazar-e-Sharif and Maimana). Additional ISAF PRTs in Feyzabad and Puli Khumri will reach operational capability during the next reporting period. ISAF continues to work to implement its plan to expand in stages throughout the country.

IV. CONCLUSION

30. The security situation across Afghanistan remains unstable. There are significant risks of unrest, outbreaks of factional violence and attacks by opposing forces, principally against the Afghan Transitional Authorities, the United Nations and other vulnerable targets, and especially during the election period. In the north, the regional commanders have continued to manoeuvre for position ahead of the elections. Efforts to extend central government authority beyond Kabul will continue to be hampered by regional power brokers.

31. Narcotics represent an enormous challenge in Afghanistan. The economy of the country is very heavily reliant upon the narcotics industry which finances the regional commanders and their power base.

32. During the reporting period, ISAF has continued to fulfil its UN mandate, within its area of operations. In addition to framework and reactive security operations, ISAF continued to execute a supporting role to security sector reform, principally in respect to the DDR programme and the associated heavy weapons cantonment activities, but also to other pillars within means and capabilities.